

23. (Twice amended) [The] An isolated and purified nucleic acid molecule [of claim 15] comprising [a polynucleotide encoding] no more than 10,000 nucleotides, wherein said nucleic acid molecule encodes a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOS: 26, 29, 32, 40, 41, and a polypeptide comprising [a non-artemin pre-pro- region sequence and] a human or mouse mature artemin amino acid sequence, wherein said artemin amino acid sequence promotes survival of neurons.

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Office for allowance of claims 12, 25, 27 and 39 and for withdrawal of all of its prior rejections. The Office's objections to claims 15-24, 26 and 40 are addressed below.

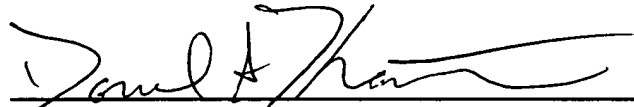
The Office objects to claims 23-24 as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim, i.e. claim 15. Claim 23 has been rewritten in independent form, and therefore, no longer depends from claim 15. Claim 23 now recites nucleic acid molecules that encode polypeptides with the listed SEQ ID NOs or polypeptides comprising the human or mouse mature artemin. Applicants submit that the above amendment overcomes the Office's objection and respectfully request that the objection be withdrawn.

The Office objects to claims 15-24, 26 and 40 for informalities. Claim 15 has been amended to include the word "sequence" after "amino acid". Applicants submit that the amendment overcomes the Office's objection to claims 15-24, 26 and 40 and respectfully request that the objection be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request entry of the foregoing amendments and remarks into the file of the above-identified application. Applicants believe that the Office's objections have been overcome or obviated, and that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request that such allowance be granted.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel S. Kasten", is written over a horizontal line.

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AMENDED CLAIMS

15. (Five times amended) An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising no more than 10,000 nucleotides, wherein said nucleic acid molecule encodes a naturally occurring artemin amino acid sequence or a fragment thereof that is biologically equivalent to artemin, and wherein said artemin amino acid sequence is at least 88% identical to SEQ ID NO:26, and wherein said artemin amino acid sequence promotes survival of neurons.

23. (Twice amended) An isolated and purified nucleic acid molecule comprising no more than 10,000 nucleotides, wherein said nucleic acid molecule encodes a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOS: 26, 29, 32, 40, 41, and a polypeptide comprising a human or mouse mature artemin amino acid sequence, wherein said artemin amino acid sequence promotes survival of neurons.